

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Speldhurst Church of England Primary School

Address	Langton Road, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0NP		
Date of inspection	21 June 2019	Status of school	VA primary
Diocese	Rochester	URN	118607

Overall Judgement	Grade	Excellent
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgements		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

Speldhurst is a primary school with 182 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. The school has recently moved to single year group teaching due to increasing numbers on roll with new classrooms built to accommodate this growth. The headteacher is also executive headteacher of another local Church school.

The school's Christian vision

Growing into all God wants us to be.

Key findings

- Exemplary Christian leadership, especially by the headteacher, ensures that the deeply embedded Christian vision underpins all areas of provision across the school.
- Pupils, in particular, see the vision as vital to the life of the school, and that the associated Christian values are instrumental in living out this vision. This results in the school being a caring, cohesive community.
- The school is constantly finding innovative and inspirational ways to meet the needs of all pupils, so that they are enabled to flourish.
- The school has deep relationships with the local community and Church, and strong global partnerships that are making a positive difference to the lives of many others.
- Worship continues to be the heartbeat of the school and provides many innovative opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually. However, younger pupils are not yet involved in leadership and evaluation.
- Pupils achieve very well in RE because practice across the school is consistently very strong. However, the numbers working at greater depth does not match those of other subjects.

Areas for development

- Increase the involvement of younger pupils in the existing excellent worship strategies, so that more pupils can engage in worship in creative and innovative ways.
- Create further opportunities for assessing pupils' critical thinking and evaluation skills in RE, so that more pupils can demonstrate working at greater depth.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

Speldhurst has a simple, clear and deeply embedded Christian vision that underpins strategic decision making and provision across all areas of school life. All stakeholders can explain the importance of this vision and see that it is key to the school's identity and success. The simplicity of the school vision means that all can understand it and apply it to their lives. Pupils are deeply reflective and understand the importance of 'growing into what God wants us to be' and live out the associated values. Notably, a Year 5 pupil explained that the vision "encourages us to be part of better things and know that God is supporting us every step of the way." Pupils thoroughly explore the biblical roots and theology of the Christian vision, values and ethos of the school especially through worship and RE. They see that the vision guides them in their lives, 'it shows us a path' said a Year 6 pupil. Pupil voice is highly valued by leaders, and their feedback is acted upon, particularly in regard to worship. The vision and values are long-established. Past pupils were invited into the school for the inspection. They expressed how the same vision and values were instrumental in shaping them into who they are.

The school's self-evaluation processes are thorough and accurate, and are driven by the school's vision and values. Governor monitoring of the school is robust. The Governor 'review days' are an exemplary strategy in reviewing the impact of the school improvement plan (SIP). The school has taken a lead role in training its own governors and those of other schools, through hosting diocesan training events on a number of key areas. Data consistently shows that the school is meeting the academic needs of all its pupils. The numbers of pupils working at greater depth and those at expected standards in reading, writing and maths, are consistently above national averages. The school has a 'creative curriculum' that achieves its aim to 'enable a journey of growth and discovery'. The curricular and extra-curricular opportunities offered to pupils are excellent, such as forest school and orienteering. Pupil learning is broad and deep. For example, pupils' experience of Remembrance Day is deepened through pupils learning about local people who served in the war. School staff bring out the very best in pupils and enable them to thrive.

The relationships between the school, church and local community are very strong. Many see these as different parts of the one village community. Parents, church and community members actively support the school whenever the need arises, for example a 'dream team' actively lend a hand to the caretaker when he asks for help. Children play happily at break time, with no barriers between the year groups. Year 6 pupils can be seen walking hand in hand with their little 'buddies' from Reception class. Pupils are mindful to live out their values of 'love, respect and forgiveness and stewardship', and as a result they care for each other and behaviour is excellent. Staff show exceptional care for pupils and each other. Parents, movingly, spoke of the support and love they receive from each other and the school staff, particularly during times of grief and crisis. There is a palpable sense of love in the school community. This is a village school that is outward looking and it lives up to its mission as a Church school.

The school embraces social action, and many initiatives arise out of the staff desire to effect positive change in the world. Teachers embody Christian values and are outstanding role models for their pupils. Teachers have visited the Watendaji Wa Neno School and the school supports this. Another staff member leads the Malawi charity, and the school fundraises to support this charity. The deputy head ran a marathon to fundraise for the continued provision of the school counsellor. These are real life examples of courageous advocates for change in their local, national and global communities. Pupils respond to their inspirational staff and fundraise for these and many other causes, such as the Little Princess Trust. The school eco-warriors club actively see their responsibility to care for the world and live out their value of stewardship, both in school and in the wider community.

Worship is greatly valued by the school community. An impressive range of opportunities is offered to enable pupils to develop spiritually. The weekly 'prayer space' is exemplary. Pupils spoke of how this time equips them for the difficulties they face, and helps them to cope with their worries. An inspiring variety of interactive prayer and reflection activities is provided for pupils to allow them the peaceful space to think and pray. Worship is also pivotal in nurturing pupil well-being. Year 6 was observed leading a thoroughly engaging worship. They explored the school value of honesty through role-play, using bible quotes, and the school then celebrated where pupils had lived out this value in their daily lives. All pupils join in prayers, responses and sing hymns enthusiastically. The leading lights group plays a considerable role in planning, leading, and reviewing worship successfully. However, younger pupils spoke of a desire to be more involved in worship. Diocesan plans and the liturgical calendar are skilfully tailored

to provide an inspiring programme for collective worship throughout the year. The relationship with St Mary's church is very strong. The incumbent noted that 'pupils feel at home in the church'. The school has special services in the church, and the church holds Messy Church and Sunday school in the school. Other churches and church groups, such as High Hopes, also contribute regularly to school worship. As a result, pupils have a broad and rich understanding of Christian worship.

Pupils have a very high level of religious literacy and use an extensive range of specialist language in their discussions. They have a secure knowledge of world religions and a solid understanding of Christianity. In one observed lesson, pupils were confidently discussing similarities in beliefs about the Christian understanding of the Trinity and the Hindus' Trimurti. Lessons are inspiring and are enhanced through trips, such as to the local mosque. RE provides pupils with the safe space to reflect on their own religious and philosophical positions. Pupils' views are challenged and affirmed when appropriate. One teacher had commented in a Year 6 pupil's book, 'It is good to know how angry racism makes you.' RE significantly impacts on the moral and cultural development of pupils. Statutory requirements for RE are very effectively met.



The effectiveness of RE is excellent

The school has robust monitoring of RE and judges that all RE teaching is good or excellent. These standards were verified during the inspection. Assessment of pupil progress is robust, and shows that standards in RE are broadly in line with other subjects for the majority of pupils. However, the number of pupils working at greater depth in RE does match those of other subjects. The school is trialling new assessment methods in response to the Understanding Christianity resources. Marking and feedback is used very effectively to challenge pupils' thinking. The 'scrapbook' style RE books show a wide variety of lesson activities, and the depth of learning taking place across the school. A range of teaching styles and activities are used to ensure pupils' religious education is of a very high quality. As a result, pupils are engaged by RE and enjoy it.

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